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ABSTRACT

This revised manual aims to assist Ohio teachers in preparing their students for success in the Ohio Grade 9 Proficiency Test in Writing. Noting that the original writing resource manual shared sample papers based on the expository practice test prompt, the revised manual states that since that manual's publication, teachers have asked for additional sample papers based on the narrative and descriptive modes. The revised manual includes assistance with all three modes of writing: narrative, descriptive, and expository. Sample papers in the manual are arranged by prompt rather than by score point. The manual is divided in the following manner: Overview of the Scoring Process; Frequently Asked Questions; Short- and Long-Range Strategies; Reference to Language Arts Model Course of Study; Overview of Writing Requirements; Sample Prompts; Sample Expository Essays/Annotations/Teaching Suggestions; and Sample Narrative Essays/Annotations/Teaching Suggestions. Appendixes are Rubric for Holistic Scoring; Summary of Writing Performance; and Guarantee of Stability of the Scoring Samples. (Contains a 14-item annotated bibliography.) (NKA)

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The Ninth-grade Proficiency Test in Writing

ED 443 122

A Resource Manual for Teachers of Writing

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Foreword

This manual has been prepared by educators and the Ohio Department of Education to assist Ohio teachers in preparing their students for success in the Ohio Ninth-grade Proficiency Test in Writing. The original writing resource manual shared sample papers based on the expository practice test prompt. Since the publication of that document, teachers have asked for additional sample papers based on the narrative and descriptive modes. As a result of these requests, we have now created this revised manual to include assistance with all three modes of writing: narrative, descriptive, and expository.

Revisions to the original manual include reducing the number of sample papers from four to two per score point and adding two sample papers per score point for narrative and descriptive prompts. These additional prompts have appeared on previous forms of the test and will not be used again in the future. Also added are references to sections of the Language Arts Model which deal with writing competencies expected at grade 9.

The sample papers are arranged by prompt rather than by score point. For that reason, the overview of each of the score points has been moved to the beginning of the sample papers. Teachers are reminded that since the same rubric is used for each mode of writing, the features included in the overview may be applied to all of the papers included in this manual.

Several features of the original manual remain. Annotations explaining the scores as well as teaching suggestions for use with students are still included. Background information on the test and its scoring, which will be of help to any teacher preparing students for the test, also remains.

The Ohio Department of Education recognizes that the ultimate goals of any testing program are to improve instruction and to enhance learning. We hope this resource will assist Ohio teachers in accomplishing these goals.

This document is a publication of the Ohio Department of Education and does not represent official policy of the State Board of Education unless specifically stated.

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The Scoring of the Ninth-grade Proficiency Test in Writing: An Overview

The Ohio Ninth-grade Proficiency Test in Writing requires each student to compose two impromptu papers. Each paper is written in response to a prompt (or assigned topic) asking for one of the following types of writing: narrative, descriptive, or expository. Papers are scored holistically using a four-point rubric designed to correspond to the thirteen learning outcomes adopted by the State Board of Education as evidence of "competence" in writing.

Papers are scored as "1, 2, 3, or 4," with score of "1" being low and "4" high. The holistic scoring process requires at least two independent readings by scorers/evaluators who have been "trained" (i.e., who share the same perceptions of score levels through rigorous and thorough discussion of "rangefinder" papers* prior to the scoring sessions). The ninth-grade rubric is printed as Appendix A.

The process by which the Ohio Ninth-grade Proficiency Test writing papers are scored is a challenging one, considering that thousands of Ohio students each write two papers each time they take the test. These papers must be read individually and scored carefully and fairly. The first concern always is to give all students an opportunity to demonstrate their abilities in writing.

Despite challenges and logistical concerns, English teachers across the state were strong in their endorsement of direct assessment as the most accurate measure of proficiency in writing.

* These rangefinder samples are student-written papers obtained during the field testing of the writing prompts for the Ninth-grade Proficiency Test.

Frequently Asked Questions

Teachers often ask questions about how papers are scored. Here are some commonly-asked questions, followed by explanations and answers.

How does the State choose a scoring company?

The company is selected through a competitive bidding process. The company which receives the contract for scoring the writing test must meet rigorous standards set forth by the Ohio Department of Education as required by legislation. Companies seeking the contract must be able to provide results to the Ohio Department of Education and schools within prescribed time limits and must show that their standards of selecting and training readers and performing the scoring tasks meet the professional standards required for this project.

How are the prompts or topics chosen for each testing session?

Prompts or writing assignments used at each testing period are developed by the item development contractor using suggestions from the Ohio Writing Content Review Committee. This committee of 25 includes 12 teachers and is representative of various professional groups, school districts, and geographical regions. All topics are field tested on a carefully selected group of Ohio students, chosen to represent demographically the student population of Ohio. Topics are reviewed by a committee for bias (socio-economic, gender, racial, etc.) and for clarity. Field test results are studied; topics which do not generate adequate responses or which prove to be unworkable or unclear are eliminated. Prompts call for one of three types of writing: narrative, descriptive, or expository. Each proficiency testing period includes two of these three types.

How are the rangefinder or "anchor" papers chosen?

Once the scoring contractor has been chosen, the employees who will be in charge of scoring meet with the rangefinder committee. Ohio educators, including classroom teachers and representatives from the Ohio Department of Education, make up this committee; it meets for several days prior to each testing session. Hundreds of field test papers are read, scored, and most importantly, discussed by the group, so that all levels of writing competence are represented in the papers chosen. This care ensures that the contractor representatives will have a clear idea of how Ohio teachers want the papers to be scored. The papers chosen are used to train readers and guide the scoring.

Who are the readers of the proficiency tests in writing and how are they chosen?

The scoring contractor recruits, interviews, and hires readers who meet the qualifications outlined in the competitive bidding process. Prospective readers must hold a bachelor's degree, be able to write a satisfactory paper, provide references and/or proof of experience as a reader, and undergo a personal interview. In addition, readers, must participate in rigorous training sessions; that is, they read, discuss, and score Ohio rangefinder papers written on the prompt they will be scoring. Readers for the Ohio project must score several sets of unmarked papers with at least 80% agreement with the decisions made by the rangefinder committee. Calibration packets are used to check the consistency of readers throughout the scoring process. Readers are dismissed if they cannot maintain a degree of consistency on a daily basis. Table leaders carefully supervise readers as the scoring progresses. Each reader is trained to score only one prompt.

Who monitors the scoring process?

Members of the rangefinder committee are present at the scoring site as observers of all aspects of the contractor's training and scoring. Teams of Ohio educators observe both fall and spring scoring sessions. Each observer submits a written report to the Department of Education, Assessment Center outlining what was seen and any concerns the person might have.

How is the score for each paper determined?

Each student paper is read by two readers who have gone through the training sessions and demonstrated competence in scoring. A paper receiving the same score from both readers receives that score (e.g., if two readers each rate the paper a "3", the score is a "3"). If adjacent scores are assigned (a "2" and a "3", for example), the two scores are averaged (making a "2.5" in this example). If more than one number separates the two scores (e.g., a "1" and a "3"), the paper goes to a third reader for adjudication.

What happens if a "problem" paper is found?

Given the number of students taking the writing test at any one testing period, problems sometimes do occur. Students may write the paper in the wrong section of the answer document, or the reader may have difficulty with handwriting or have a question about the students response to the topic. These problems are taken to the scoring supervisor in that room, who may "tag" a paper with a special note of clarification for the next reader or whoever may read and score the paper at that point. Every effort is taken to ensure that student work is read carefully and fairly.

How is the final score in writing determined?

The scores on the two papers are simply totaled. A score of "5.0" is the passing standard. Each student must respond to both prompts to pass. Some examples follow:

a student who has written a "3" paper (both readers agreed on a "3") and a "2.5" paper (one reader scored the paper "2" and the other a "3") receives a score of "5.5", a passing score.

a student who earns a "2" on one paper (both readers agreed to a "2") and a "1.5" on the other (one reader scored the paper a "2" and the other a "1") receives a total of "3.5" and does not pass.

Scores are converted into P and F on the reports sent to the schools; a numerical score for all students is also given.

What information is given about students who do not pass?

Papers of students who do not pass are read analytically in order to provide some guidance for teachers during the intervention process. Notations of Satisfactory (S) and Unsatisfactory (U) are made in the following four areas:
content (tied to learning outcomes 1, 2, and 4)
organization (tied to learning outcome 3)
language (tied to learning outcomes 5 and 6)
writing conventions (tied to learning outcomes 7 to 13).

The analytic notations are included on the school results.

Are the student papers returned?

Papers written for the Ninth-grade Proficiency Test are typically not returned. However, the scoring company in 1998 began to offer as an optional service for districts, returning photocopies of the writing samples for all students in the district. The district test coordinator would have more information about this optional service. Prompts, like the papers, are secure. It is not permissible to make copies of the papers or the prompts before they are sent in for scoring.

Can the school ask that a student's papers be re-scored?

Yes. If a school has reason to believe that an error was made in scoring, a school may appeal the score to the Department for a re-evaluation of the student's writing. The district test coordinator would have more information about this appeal procedure.

How is consistency of scoring maintained year by year?

To ensure that scoring of the tests in writing is consistent over time, the rangefinder committee, charged with reviewing and choosing anchor papers used in the crucial step of training readers, has a stable membership and reviews past rangefinder papers to make sure their selections and scoring of training papers do not vary over time.

How is consistency of scoring achieved during each test period?

Scoring contractors take great pains to see that their readers score consistently. Periodic checking of individual readings during the scoring process helps retain the consistency of scoring. Such careful and scrupulous supervision of scoring procedures is absolutely necessary if every Ohio student is to be given a fair chance to perform satisfactorily on the Ninth-grade Proficiency Test in Writing.

Can a student with disabilities be exempted from part of the Ninth-grade Proficiency Tests?

Yes. Participation in or exemption from any part of the proficiency test shall be made by the individual education plan (IEP) team. Exemptions are made in each specific test area. A student might be exempted from taking the writing test by virtue of a disability but could be responsible for the remaining test areas.

Is English as a second language (ESL) a valid reason to exempt a student?

Exemptions are assigned only through IEP decisions and because of disability. A student with English as a second language or a student who is limited English proficient (LEP) may be given a waiver from taking the writing test at a particular test administration. That waiver, however, is temporary and does not relieve the student of eventual responsibility of passing the proficiency tests and completing curriculum requirements to receive a diploma.

What kind of modifications would be appropriate for a student with disabilities?

Any modifications in administrative procedures specified in the IEP that do not change the content of the test would be appropriate. For example, if use of a scribe or a word processor were prescribed in the IEP document, then it could be appropriate for the student's use in taking the proficiency test in writing. If a word processor is used, the computer-generated writing must be hand written onto the student's answer document.

NOTE: Any transcribing of student work must be copied exactly as the student indicated. No changes or corrections may be made to the work. The integrity of the student work is the highest priority.

What Teachers Can do to Help Students (short-and long-term strategies).

The key to success in the Ninth-grade Proficiency Test in Writing rests upon careful and consistent teaching of writing at all grade levels and providing regular opportunities for students to write in all classes.

Teachers and administrators should consider both short-range and long-range strategies to help students achieve passing scores:

Short-range Strategies

- Use the rubric and the learning outcomes as important parts of writing instruction in class.
- Review with students what they will be expected to do on the writing test. Encourage them to budget their time to allow for prewriting and planning, drafting, revision, and editing/proofreading. (Remember that rangefinder papers are chosen with the knowledge that the papers were written in about an hour and thus represent "impromptu" writing. Even the best papers may have some errors.) Advise students that they should take as much time as necessary to complete the writing samples.
- Review with students the qualities of writing as outlined in the rubric and the learning outcomes. Help students generate ideas and organize them coherently. Successful papers must exhibit content, organizational strength, and supporting ideas.
- Suggest to students the necessity of reading the prompts carefully and attentively. Go over key words like narrate, describe, explain. Discuss in class various topics (or have students make them up) and ask students how they might develop the topics into papers.
- Examine carefully students' own writing (from class assignments, portfolios, competency test reports, etc.) to determine where they are having problems. Prepare mini-lessons or arrange peer groups or peer tutors to work on troublesome areas.
- Provide students with models of acceptable and unacceptable writing and discuss what makes one paper acceptable and another unacceptable. The papers in this booklet may be used as examples for this purpose. Reproducing the papers in this booklet is encouraged. Discuss the papers, have students suggest revisions, and edit the papers.
- Be sure that students understand that they should take the tests seriously, yet not become so tense or anxious that they might not be able to write at all. Frequent practice in impromptu writing will help to alleviate tension. Talk to parents, too, about the tests and solicit their aid and advice.

- Remind all students that they have much to write about and the ability to do the writing. Build on the strengths students have to help them overcome their weaknesses.

Long-Range Strategies

- Teaching writing as a process is important and useful. Teachers can and should provide instruction and guidance as students move from prewriting through drafting to revising and editing. Practice the strategies which will make those processes easier for students and discuss with students how such processes can be adapted to impromptu writing conditions.

- Implement the Ohio Model Competency-based Language Arts Program. This document (which includes a course of study, performance objectives, recommended assessments, and intervention strategies) stresses the necessity of integrating all of the language arts: reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.

- Make sure that writing is an integral part of your school's educational program, K-12. Students need to feel comfortable and confident as writers; writing frequently will help to make them so.

- Encourage all teachers (not just teachers of language arts) to require writing in all content areas. Encourage them to use writing as a tool for learning. Writing can be accomplished in many forms, from journals and learning logs to formal papers.

- Provide training for all educators in teaching and evaluating writing. This training should include using the writing process, applying the Ninth-grade Proficiency Test Rubric, and understanding holistic scoring methods.

Reference to Language Arts Model Curriculum

The requirements for student writing on the Ninth-grade Proficiency Test can be related back to the Language Arts Model. The test outcomes cover competencies that students should meet by the end of the eighth grade. However, preparing students to meet these competencies should begin much earlier. The Model indicates competencies for the Ninth-grade Proficiency Test beginning in grade 6. Correlation to the Model can be found on the following pages in:

Grade 6 competencies–pages 117 to 119
Grade 6 performance objectives–page 127
Grade 7 competencies–pages 132 to 135
Grade 7 performance objectives–page 142
Grade 8 competencies–pages 148 to 151
Grade 8 performance objectives–page 157

By tying the writing requirements for the Ninth-grade Proficiency Test to the Model curriculum, teachers are not only preparing students to do well on the test but to do well in writing in general.

Overview of Writing Requirements

The following pages contain information about student sample papers and the four score points. Just as the scoring rubric applies to all three modes of writing, these overviews of the four score points can be applied to all three modes. Both essays that the student writes must be treated equally during the scoring process. Therefore, all requirements for each of the three modes must be the same.

Overview of writing samples earning a score point of "4"

The following list describes the general attributes of writing samples that will earn a "4" score point on the Ohio Ninth-grade Proficiency Test Rubric. (See Appendix A.) Because the writing is produced in an impromptu situation, errors may occur and the paper may be less polished than a final product. The sample "4" papers show a range within the "4" score point.

The writing

- focuses on the topic with ample supporting details arranged in logical order that may be obvious or subtle.
- demonstrates solid development of content from introduction to conclusion.
- conveys a sense of completeness or wholeness sufficient to the purpose and to the audience specified.
- shows a mature command of language. The writer has selected words carefully to convey meaning. Word choice may also be vivid and colorful.
- contains correct sentence structure with rare exceptions. Transitions contribute to the smooth flow of the writing.
- follows the conventions of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling with few exceptions.

Overview of writing samples earning a score point of "3"

The following list describes the general attributes of writing samples that will earn a "3" score point on the Ohio Ninth-grade Proficiency Test Rubric. (See Appendix A.) Because the writing is produced in an impromptu situation, errors may occur and the paper may be less polished than a final product. The sample "3" papers show a range within the "3" score point.

The writing

- is related to the topic with adequate supporting ideas or examples, although development may be uneven.
- addresses the prompt and demonstrates a clear understanding of it.
- uses an organizational plan appropriate to the prompt. Logical order is apparent, although some lapses may occur.
- exhibits some sense of completeness or wholeness. The reader should feel that the writer's message is complete. The writer may have a clear introduction and related closing; the writer may also communicate completeness through clear internal connections.
- shows competence with vocabulary. Word choice is generally adequate and precise.
- may contain occasional errors or awkward constructions that do not affect the flow of communication. Sentence structure is generally sound.
- follows the conventions of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. Errors are few and do not impede communications.

Overview of writing samples earning a score point of "2"

The following list describes the general attributes of writing samples that will earn a "2" score point on the Ohio Ninth-grade Proficiency Test Rubric. (See Appendix A.) Because the writing is produced in an impromptu situation, errors may occur and the paper may be less polished than a final product. The sample "2" papers show a range within the "2" score point.

The writing

- demonstrates an awareness of the topic but may have extraneous or loosely related material.
- includes some supporting ideas or examples, but they are not always developed.
- may seem incomplete or may fail to demonstrate wholeness. The writer attempts an organizational pattern.
- contains adequate but limited and predictable vocabulary.
- demonstrates knowledge of the conventions of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling of commonly used words.
- may contain errors in sentence structure, agreement, and verb and noun forms.

Overview of writing samples earning a score point of "1"

The following list describes the general attributes of writing samples that will earn a "1" score point on the Ohio Ninth-grade Proficiency Test Rubric. (See Appendix A.) Because the writing is produced in an impromptu situation, errors may occur and the paper may be less polished than a final product. The sample "1" papers show a range within the "1" score point.

The writing

- is only slightly related to the topic and offers few supporting ideas or examples.
- has little or no evidence of an organization pattern.
- contains ideas that are developed erratically, inadequately, or illogically.
- contains limited or inappropriate vocabulary.
- has errors in sentence structure and usage that impede communication, including errors in basic punctuation and capitalization as well as in the spelling of commonly used words.

Sample Papers

The sample papers on the following pages were generated during a field testing of prompts for the Ninth-grade Proficiency Test in writing. For this test, students wrote under conditions similar to those used in the regular test administrations. These particular prompts will not be used on any future forms of the writing test.

The essays are grouped by prompt in 4, 3, 2, 1 scoring order with expository first, followed by narrative, then descriptive papers. The three sample prompts are below.

Expository Prompt (sample papers #1 through #8):

Your school newspaper is printing a series of articles about heroes and heroines. Write about someone who is a hero or heroine to you. That person may be someone you know, someone you have read about, a celebrity, or a historical figure. Explain why you believe this person is someone to admire.

Narrative Prompt (sample papers #9 through #16):

You are asked to write a story for the first issue of the student magazine at your school. Write a story about a time when you were very happy. Tell the magazine readers what happened on that occasion and why it made you happy.

Descriptive Prompt (sample papers #17 through #24):

Your English class is reading stories about childhood. As part of this activity, your teacher asks you to think about an experience that you had as a child. Write an essay for your teacher describing that experience. You might consider describing what happened and how you felt about the experience.

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With all the crime and injustice in the world today, many young people need a hero or a heroine with all the right qualities to look unto. They need someone who they can depend on and who will show them the difference between right and wrong. There are many great and important people in the world today who are very good examples for kids, but the person who I can count on when I'm having a rough time is someone very close to me who is easy to reach when I need her. My grandma, with her unique qualities and virtues, has influenced me the most in my life.

My grandma is a loving woman who always shows how much she cares for our whole family. She really doesn't do anything spectacular, but just by being there she touches us in many ways. My grandma always has a hand willing to help and an ear ready to listen. Her heart is always open to reach out and show us, in the many little things she does, just how much she cares. She is never too busy to tell us how much

she loves us and, somehow, she could make what seems to be the biggest tragedy seem small just by her comforting words. When I go over to my grandma's house, I alway feel loved and cared for. I hope I can someday make my own family have that same feeling.

My grandma has also influenced me in many religious aspects. She is the holiest woman I know, but she doesn't show it off to act praise. She has taught me, through her kindness, that to love God is the same as loving your fellow human beings. She treats everyone as though they were the most special person in the world, and I often think of her in the day, knowing how ashamed she would be of me if she saw the way I was acting towards others. I try to use her actions as an example for my life.

Another quality of my grandma that I really feel has influenced me is her ability to be strong in times of trouble. When there is a setback my grandma does not sit down

and feel sorry for herself, she bounces back and comes out fighting. She doesn't let sadness and sorrow get the best of her. If she is feeling frightened and scared, she hides it so that she doesn't alarm others. This is a quality I really admire in my grandma and it gives me courage during hard times.

I feel that the qualities my grandma possesses have made a big influence on me. I try to use her life as a pattern for mine. This just goes to show that you do not need to look far for a good example for always young people today.

Paper 1 (Expository, score point 4)

Annotations:

- This paper, which identifies a family member (a grandmother) as a heroic figure, succeeds in part because of its clear sense of movement and direction. While the five-paragraph organizational scheme is conventional, the writer uses it effectively to enumerate the grandmother's admirable traits: her love for family, her religious faith, and her strength in times of difficulty.
- A clear thesis (*My grandma, with her unique qualities and virtues, has influenced me the most in my life*) appears in the introduction, and the conclusion effectively reconnects the grandmother to the writer's initial comment about young people's need for heroes/heroines. While specific examples and incidents might have sharpened this paper further, certainly it provides an explanation of each point.
- The language, while almost clichéd in places (has a hand willing help and an ear ready to listen), is clear and understandable, and sentence variety is evident, particularly as a result of the writer's interesting placement of clauses and phrases (e.g., *She has taught me, through her kindness, that to love God...*).
- Except for a few comma errors in the fourth paragraph, the paper is nearly error-free in writing conventions.

Teaching Suggestions:

Have small groups of students make an outline of this paper. Point out that, while the five-paragraph design is conventional, it does serve the purpose of setting fourth clear points about this grandmother. Discuss with the class how this design might be expanded by adding a fourth (and maybe even a fifth) point about the grandmother.

As a whole class, brainstorm specific events or experiences to support the paper's generalizations, having students use their own grandparents as sources for ideas.

Divide the class into three groups. Have each group rewrite one of the paper's three body paragraphs by adding brainstormed examples and details.

Ask students to make a list of the transitional words and sentences used in the paper. Discuss with them how transitions serve to keep readers "on track" in a piece of writing.

Rewrite one of the paragraphs of this piece so that all the sentences are short, simple statements. Then give your rewrite to students as a sentence combining exercise and invite them to experiment with various combining. Have students compare their revisions with the sentences in the original as a way of discussing sentence variety in writing.

Paper 2 (Expository, score point 4)

A very important hero, to me at least, is Robert Rogers He is a little-known hero, but he was the first military leader to effectively use guerrila tactics to completely confuse an enemy A major in the French and Indian war, Rogers and his elite groupe, Rogers' Rangers, terrorized French troops with their unorthodox fighting styles and tactics.

Rogers was a career military man, of average intelligence but gifted with innovation. He devised the Rangers in 1754, and wrote up 15 rules that are the basis for today's elite unit, the Airborne Rangers.

Rogers was a soldier, and a good one at that. He created the first guerrila unit, Rogers' Rangers. He created a harsh set of laws, because he cared for his men. By using hit-and-run tactics, he changed the face of colonial warfare. But most importantly, he only accepted the best volinteers into his cadre. By creating such stringent standards for enlistment he ensured a truly elite fighting force. Finally, Robert Rogers set the marker for today's elite forces. The Airborne Rangers, the Green Berets, the Special Forces, the Navy S.E.A.L.S. and the British Commandos all have to thank Robert Rogers for innovation, stringent standards, and basic hard work. Without him, these modern-day elite forces would not have come about.

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Paper 2 (Expository, score point 4)

Annotations:

- This response to the prompt demonstrates the influence that other academic disciplines can have on writing because it features a historical figure, Robert Rogers, as the hero.
- The paper has a tightly structured beginning with a brief introduction to the *little-known hero*. A clear rationale for calling Robert Rogers a hero is presented by citing Rogers' development of *guerrilla tactics* in warfare. The writer uses specific, detailed support to prove reasons for admiring this historical figure. The examples of Rogers' *set of laws* for military behavior, his innovation in tactics and his *stringent standards* for recruitment demonstrate his heroic contributions.
- In addition to clear organization and strong content, another prime characteristic of this response is vocabulary. Word choice (*cadre, elite,* and *stringent*) adds to the impact of the piece.
- Transitions are smooth throughout the writing sample, and sentence structure is varied. While phrasing is sometimes repetitive, this paper is a controlled sample that uses mature vocabulary and interesting sentence construction to convey content.
- Writing conventions are followed even in complicated sentence patterns.

Teaching Suggestions:

Have the class look at the sentence structures used in this paper. Discuss what makes them effective. Examine in particular the varied ways the writer begins sentences.

Make a list of the vivid and precise words and phrases used. Discuss why such words make the paper engaging.

Discuss why this paper is interesting and informative. What do readers learn about Rogers?

Discuss the final paragraph in this paper for its internal organization. What transitions are used? Why are they effective?

Discuss what risks the writer took in proposing such a *little-known hero*. What additional responsibility for explanation does the writer assume when choosing a lesser-known hero?

Discuss what a page of prewriting notes might look like for this paper.

Ozzie Newsome

I admire Ozzie Newsome because he is an all around good guy and one of the greatest football players of all time. He has caught the most career passes for a tight end in the NFL. He has sure hands and rarely drops a pass. He helps charities like the United Way by doing commericials and spending time with needy kids. I met him at Euclid Square Mall one time and saw him on the golf course another time. It felt different to meet one of the guys on the Browns, and to know that he has a similar life like ours. Whether it's on Sundays at the game or any time at all, Ozzie is a good hero and a polite person. I guarentee you will see him in the hall of fame some day.

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Paper 3 (Expository, score point 3)

Annotations:

- This response to the prompt is a relatively short sample that identifies a sports figure, Ozzie Newsome, as a hero. Although the sample is not well-developed, it has characteristics of a "3" paper, such as a sense of completeness and specific control.
- The writer understands the prompt and gives two reasons for this admiration of Ozzie Newsome. The fact that Newsome *rarely drops a pass* demonstrates why the writer thinks that Ozzie Newsome is *one of the greatest football players of all time*. Proof that Newsome is *an all around good guy* includes his support of charities and the writer's encounters with Newsome. The development of these ideas, however, is uneven. Detail is sparse with only one personal reference to develop the thought that Newsome has a *similar life like ours*.
- In this selection, the writer's voice is clear. Interesting language (*has sure hands*) is utilized in the sample. With the exception of sentence 7, all of the other sentences begin with the subject/verb pattern.
- The writer does adhere to writing conventions.

Teaching Suggestions:

Have students tell what reasons the writer has for making Newsome a hero. As a class, tell which reasons need to be supported. Suggest methods of supporting these reasons.

Have students go through the paper, marking words and phrases into two categories: general statements and specific details. How might the paper be improved by adding specific details?

Analyze sentence 7. What does the structure of this sentence contribute to the paper? Have students combine sentence 2 and 3 and then 5 and 6, using participial phrases or adverbial clauses to begin the sentence.

Have students make a list of parallel structures (*has sure hands and rarely drops a pass*) used by the writer. Discuss why they are effective. What other methods could the writer have used to state these ideas?

One person I admire and believe should be considered a hero is Dr. Martain Luther King. He was one of the worlds most faithful clergymen in many ways. Some one could have done anything to him and he would not do anything to them. He was setting a non-violent example of world peace among all men. Blacks to Jews, oreintals to Irish, he just wanted peace. He was the leader of the cival rights movement and well deserved the title. His actions were inspired by Mahatimi Ghaundhi. He truly beleived all men were created equal. He was involved in many sit-ins and freedom marches. At one of theM, he gave his world famous "I have a dream" speech. He beleived that his children would soon be able to take a seat in the front of a bus. Little did he know his dream came true. Its too bad he couldn't see it. He now rests at his grave, in Atlanta, Georgia.

Paper 4 (Expository, score point 3)

Annotations:

- The paper has an interesting and viable thesis: that Dr. King is a true hero because his non-violent ways provide an example of world peace to all people.
- The writer attempts some strong arguments but fails to develop them with adequate detail. About midway through the paper (at the sentence *He truly beleived all men were created equal*), the writer introduces extraneous and loosely related facts in no particular order. A clear and more consistent focus on what made King heroic in the mind of the writer followed by a selection of details to support that thesis, rather than generalizations about King's life and work, would have made this paper a more solid 3.
- Vocabulary is generally limited and predictable, although the writer attempts some sophisticated references (*front of a bus, "I have a dream" speech*). The student takes some risks in word choice (*Mahatimi Ghaundi, clergymen*) and in complex sentence patterns (sentence 5, for example) yet makes noticeable errors in spelling (Martain, cival, beleived, and oreintals) and in the use of the apostrophe (*worlds most faithful clergymen, its, could'nt*).

Teaching Suggestions:

Discuss with the class the main idea presented by this writer. As a class, write a strong statement that reflects this point (i.e., Dr. Martin Luther King is a hero because his non-violent ways set an example of world peace for all people.) Ask students to go through the paper sentence by sentence, detail by detail. Which points are relevant to the thesis? Which are not? What could be added to support the thesis further?

Take one or two sentences from the paper that are examples of unclear points (sentence 3 or 5). Have the class suggest rewritten versions of the sentences.

Make a transparency of the paper and go through it with the class, putting a circle around every *he* used. Have the class suggest nouns or noun phrases that could be substituted for variety and clarity.

Have the students make a list of all the misspelled words in the paper. Discuss with them whether or not there is a pattern to the errors (for example, in words that have *ie* or *ei*). Sometimes it is helpful if students keep a list of all the words they misspell and then isolate the problem areas they have. If patterns of error appear (as they will), students can check for words in a more systematic way during the editing process.

Prepare a mini-lesson on apostrophes in contractions and possessives. Have students go through the paper making a list of words which have apostrophes used incorrectly and of words which do not have apostrophes but should. Use the words to review the rules.

Devise substitute structures for the subject-verb sentence pattern. Replace "to be" verbs with action verbs.

Paper 5 (Expository, score point 2)

One of my heroines is Paula ABbuhl because she looks good and because she's a singer. She is a very good dancer, she's been dancing since 12 and she teachers dancing for all ages from famous to not famous people. Puala is good singer with a pretty voice. She was once a cheerleader for the L.A. Lakers but then moved on to a dancing teacher and a singer. Puala now lives in California. Her best friend is famous actor in movies. Puala's mom and dad are divorced. She has at least a sister who she loves very much.

Paper 5 (Expository, score point 2)

Annotations:

- The thesis that Paula Abdul is a heroine is weakly supported, since the paper is mostly a list of the accomplishments and activities of the singer, with no apparent order of presentation or internal organization.
- Vocabulary is limited and ordinary; the word *good,* for example, is applied to her most consistently. Sentences are almost all simple structures with linking verbs used extensively.
- Factual information and details about the subject are offered, but they fail to explain why she is a hero (*she looks good* and *is good singer*, and *is a very good dancer*).
- Paula is misspelled after the first sentence.
- In general, the writing is immature in focus, language, and organization.

Teaching Suggestions:

Have the class suggest an alternate thesis sentence for this paper. For example, a possible thesis might be that Paula Abdul is a talented singer, dancer, and teacher. Go through the paper sentence by sentence with the class, identifying the idea presented as relevant to that thesis or not. Have students suggest additional details that should be there to support the thesis.

As a class, generate questions you would like to ask the writer of this paper about Paula Abdul. You might, for example, use the five-W heuristic (who, what, where, when, and why).

Take several sentences, for example, sentence 3: *she's been dancing since 12 and she teaches dancing for all ages from famous to not famous people* and sentence 5: *She was once a cheerleader for the L.A. Lakers but then moved on to a dancing teacher and a singer*. Have the class suggest rewritten versions of each sentence that clarify the ideas.

Have students rewrite the sentences, substituting action verbs for many of the "to be" verbs used. In addition, have the class suggest alternate combining of the ideas sentences.

The writer has used the adjective *good* consistently (*looks good, good dancer, good singer*). Have the class

I have two heroes Larry Bird and Rex Chapman (Basketball players) I like Larry Bird because the way he plays he's got one of the best shots in the NBA he's a master of the 3-point shot he's one of the dest in the league but he can still play like a rookie sometimes but he can still get the job done he's one of the best that ever played this game. (Charlotte Hornets) Rex Chapman 2nd year player from Kentucky came out as a Sophomore. They called him the "Rookie Sensation" he also has one of the best shot and 3-point shot for a rookie he had the highest percentage 3-point shot ever as a rookie. And also about Larry Bird, Boston waited one year for him to come out of College he came from Indiana State.

suggest more descriptive and more specific terms for good.

Paper 6 (Expository, score point 2)

Annotations:

- Although the prompt calls for the identification of a single hero, the writer chooses to identify and discuss two heroes, both basketball stars. The paper is arranged with details first about Larry Bird and then about Rex Chapman. The organizational scheme used by the writer, however, is disrupted when material about Bird is introduced at the end of the section on Chapman.
- The writer makes no attempt to get into the topic or to conclude the paper satisfactorily.
- Serious sentence structure problems, particularly run-ons, abound in the paper. Thoughts are strung together without linking devices or punctuation signals (e.g., *They called him the "Rookie Sensation" he also has one of the best shot and 3-point shot for a rookie he had the highest percentage 3-point shot ever as a rookie*).
- The paper offers many concrete facts about two players, although little distinction between important and unimportant ideas is made.

Teaching Suggestions:

Make two columns on the board or on a transparency. Invite students to list details presented on the two sports figures. Discuss the order in which the details are presented. Is it in the best order? Should any details be presented earlier? Later?

Discuss with the class whether the paper would have been stronger if the focus had been on one hero rather than on two. If students want to use two heroes, make them aware of the importance of linking the two together under a single thesis. Suggest a way this linking might be accomplished in an opening paragraph that relates a comparison between Bird and Chapman. Compose an ending which restates or reinforces the thesis.

Ask students to go through the paper, sentence by sentence. Suggest rewrites of sentences to make them grammatically complete.

Ask students to tell you what specific facts are given by the writer about the sports figures. Discuss how the specific information adds to the paper's quality.

The writer uses parentheses to insert information. In what other ways could that information be given?

If I had to pick hero that was a celebrity it would probably be Boomer Esiason, the quarterback for the Cincinnati Bengals. He is a really good quarterback and the girls like him too.

My hero that I know is my dad. He is a really great person and he's fun to be around too. He also knows alot about sports. They would be the two heros I would have if I had to have one.

The End

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Paper 7 (Expository, score point 1)

Annotations:

- The response to the topic in this paper indicates a misunderstanding of the assignment given. The writer must have felt compelled to write about two kinds of heroes–one who was a celebrity (in this case, Boomer Esiason) and one who was familiar to the writer (the dad). The misconception is reinforced in the last sentence, where the writer repeats that it was about two heroes, *if I had to have one* (i.e., a hero).
- The paper lacks specific support; all it says is that Boomer is *a really good quarterback* and the dad is *a really great person* who knows about sports. Concrete information is needed to explain why Boomer is a *really good quarterback* and why the dad *is a really great person.*
- The paper shows a good command of mechanics.

Teaching Suggestions:

Use this paper as an opportunity to impress upon students the importance of reading a prompt carefully. Discuss the question with the class of whether the writer felt he or she had to write on two heroes–one a celebrity and one a familiar person.

Have students make a list of questions they would ask the writer of this paper about Boomer Esiason and the father. For example, why does the writer think Esiason is *a really good quarterback*? What abilities/talents do *good* quarterbacks have? Why is the *father fun to be around*? Use this paper to get students to see the difference between generalization and detail, between opinion and fact. End the exercise by having one group of students write a well developed and supported paragraph on Esiason and the other on the father. Then trade paragraphs and have the students write an opening and a closing for each paragraph.

Talk to the class about phrases such as *really good quarterback* or *really great person*. Ask students to supply examples which will turn "telling" words in to "showing" examples.

Discuss with the class the last sentence of the paper. Ask for interpretations of the sentence. Have students rewrite the sentence to make the meaning clear.

My Dad is a hero Because he always get's on me about My school work he tell's me TO Do my Best and study allot. He helped me allot, with my school work. And know I have Brung my grades UP TO A's an B's. I Love my Dad and he Loves me. He is My hero, that should Be in the school's new spaper.

My Dad show's me thing Like the nature, wild Life, love and tell's me Right from wrong.

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Paper 8 (Expository, score point 1)

Annotations:

- This paper concentrates on one hero (the writer's father) and supports that choice by giving several reasons he is to be admired–encouraging the writer, loving and showing her or him things like nature, love, and good conduct.
- Several good points can be made about this work: a clear indication of the audience the essay is intended for (the school newspaper) and a good attempt at revision (a reordering of the last two sentences).
- More specific support, however, would improve the work (i.e., how does the father help with school, what does he show the writer about nature and wildlife).
- The ordering of details about the father seems to follow no plan. Transitions would strengthen the paper's organization.
- In addition, basic errors in verb forms (*I have brung*), spelling (*allot*), and word forms (*know* for *now* and *show's* and *tell's*) keep this paper at a score "1" level.

Teaching Suggestions:

Have students outline the order of the material presented in the paper by listing the ideas on the board or on an overhead transparency. Have a class discussion about the importance of revision and whether the student's revision was wise or not. Discuss with the class how the student has indicated where the revision should be. Is it clear to the reader?

The writer offers two reasons his dad is his hero: *He helped me allot, with my school work* and ... *show's me thing like the nature, wildlife, love and tell's me right from wrong*. What details could be given about each general idea?

Have students, working in pairs, do a simple transcription practice. Have one student read the paper orally while the other writes down what he or she hears. Then compare the punctuation, spelling, word use, etc., of the original to the student's version.

Go through the paper and write down all verbs and verb phrases. Make the corrections in inflections, verb forms, etc.

I jumped for joy when I heard the news. I had gotten a solo in the "Nutcracker" Finally, the blood, sweat, and tears paid off There is little that can compare with the feeling that you've earned something that you've worked hard to get

Dance class was particularly hard that day, I remember how bad my muscles ached and the sweat from my body made my leotard wet. I had been working extra hard because I noticed that my dance instructor, Shelagh was watching and taking notes.

I really was hoping to get a good part in the "Nutcracker" but I was doubtful because it's my first year at this new dance teacher. I had started the year doing a lot of things incorrectly and having to change them which was extremely hard. I felt I was making progress though.

After class was finished Shelagh posted the cast list on the

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bulletin board. I slowly walked up to check if my name was on the list, and there I saw my name alone by the word Russian. I had got the solo as the Russian doll!

The fact that I got the solo not only was a privledge itself, but it showed me that all the time I had spent frustrated, achy, and sore had meant something. Because of my hard work and determination, I had finally made progress. The feeling of joy and accomplishment swept over me. This is my happiest moment. But I know it's not going to be the only one as long as I keep working and trying my hardest, I can achieve anything.

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Paper 9 (Narrative, score point 4)

Annotations:

- While this paper contains some errors not seen in other 4-score-point pieces (inconsistent verb tenses, for example), it does effectively focus on a single incident and report it fully. The paper relates the value of hard work as the writer describes how she was selected for a part in the "Nutcracker" ballet.
- The paper, in many ways, is as much a descriptive piece as a narrative piece as the writer uses phrases like *sweat from my body made my leotard wet* or the more cliched *blood, sweat, and tears*.
- Even though sentences are largely of simple construction at the outset, they become more stylistically varied and complex later in the piece (*The fact that I got the solo not only was a privledge itself, but it showed me...*). Transitions are used effectively in places (*After class was finished...*).

Teaching Suggestions:

Divide the class into small groups. Give each group a short list of verbs or have groups generate their own lists. Each group then conjugates each verb in the tense(s) suggested by the teacher. Discuss completed lists, then generate sentences using each tense of each verb. Generate paragraphs, emphasizing one tense at a time. Discuss importance of maintaining consistent verb tenses.

Discuss use of specific/descriptive words, rather than such words as *good, bad,* and *a lot*. Have students generate more specific words and phrases to replace these.

The paper is a good example of revealing the conclusion initially and the subsequent chronology that describes how the girl won the part in the "Nutcracker." Students might want to practice writing a narrative using this method.

Discuss the three main problem areas involved in verb usage: irregular verbs, sound-alike verbs that are confused with one another, and unnecessary changes in verb tense. Write examples of these kinds of problems on the board and have the students identify and correct each problem. For example, you might have the class work with the following incorrect sentences:

a) Everyone had went to the park for a picnic.
b) We sat the basket down on the picnic table.
c) As soon as we took the food out of the basket, the ants arrive.

Then have the students find examples of incorrect verb usage in the paper and suggest revisions.

Jay came to school all excited. Julie, Jami, and I were all curious as to what the special occasion may be. When questioned about it Jay told us that the three of us were all invited to her house on Saturday to sleep over. Wow! Her mom and dad must be crazy to allow four teenaged girls to be in their house at the same time.

At lunch, we talked about what we should do. We could call boys, watch movies, play games, or, wait! Let's have a beauty pageant! So the four of us all picked a different state to represent. And when Saturday came, we had to have many different outfits to wear.

Well, Saturday afternoon came and I was trying to find some great outfits. My mom was helping me, but we just couldn't find anything. I was ransacking my brain for ideas when something popped into my head. Yeah! I'll wear ordinary outfits for the other events, and when the time for the evening gown competition came, I'd be something out of the ordinary. I knew just the thing to wear. Boy, was I going

to surprise everyone?

On my way to Jay's house, I almost chickened out, but I decided that I didn't have time to get anything else. So it was either the outfit I had, or nothing, and I didn't want to be a party-pooper.

When the time came for us to do the pageant, Jay's mom came down to act as the judge of the competition. Everything went smoothly. Jay, Jami, and Julie had all put a lot of time and effort into their outfits. They were all surprised that I was so ordinary. Wait till they see what's coming to them, I thought.

Finally, the last of the events came, the evening gowns. Each of us had to take our turns of walking out & prancing around showing off our dresses. Jami went first. She had on a dress that she had worn to on of the dances in eighth grade. Jay was next. She wore her mom's old prom dress. Next in line was Julie. She had on a dress that she had worn to a wedding.

Jay came to school all excited. Julie, Jami, and I were all curious as to what the special occasion may be. When questioned about it Jay told us that the three of us were all invited to her house on Saturday to sleep over. Wow! Her mom and dad must be crazy to allow four teenaged girls to be in their house at the same time.

At lunch, we talked about what we should do. We could call boys, watch movies, play games, or, wait! Let's have a beauty pageant! So the four of us all picked a different state to represent. and when Saturday came, we had to have many different outfits to wear.

Well, Saturday afternoon came and I was trying to find some great outfits. My mom was helping me, but we just couldn't find anything. I was ransacking my brain for ideas when something popped into my head. Yeah! I'll wear ordinary outfits for the other events, and when the time for the evening gown competition came, I'd be something out of the ordinary. I knew just the thing to wear. Boy, was I going

Paper 10 (Narrative, score point 4)

Annotations:

- This narrative vividly recounts a childhood memory as it relates how four teenage girls turn a slumber party into a mock beauty pageant. The writer leads us through the process in a methodical but engaging manner. Time markers (*At lunch..., Saturday afternoon...*) are used effectively as transitions, and sentences are varied and interesting.
- Vivid details (the description of the hippie costume) and diction (*ransacking my brain* and *prancing around with my peace bell chiming*) create interest and appeal.
- Dramatic intensity is created by not revealing until the very end what the special "evening gown" costume will be. The comment about how she almost *chickened out* adds to the suspense.

Teaching Suggestions:

After students have read this selection, ask volunteers to define chronological order. You may then wish to write on the board a scrambled list of events from a story the class has read. Have the students put the events in order and ask them to tell why the story now makes sense. You might ask students to suggest transitional words and phrases that could be used to make clear the order of the tested story events. Then have students list the words and phrases that make the writing from the manual clear and orderly.

Have students find problems with verb tense consistency and change these verbs to past tense.

Descriptive details often add richness to a narrative paper. Have students locate such details in this piece and suggest where other descriptive passages might be included.

Discuss use of suspense to sustain the reader's interest. Identify hints that add to the suspenseful nature of this paper.

Hi students! I am going to tell you about a happy occasion.

It was in seventh grade and the day of report cards. I knew that I was going to at least make honor roll, but I was hoping for principal's list. I only made honor roll last year, and this year I really wanted to make principal's list so I worked extra hard. I thought about my grades all day long. At last it was the last period of the day. I only had about ten more minutes left. The announcements came on and announced that we could not leave for homeroom. I was so nervous walking down the hall. Our teacher made a few quick announcements about the grades and passed them out. I waited a few minutes to see what everyone else received, finally I opened it. If you haven't already realized it yet, I made the principal's list. I was so happy that I just ran out of the room and ran all the way home.

My parents were so proud of me I really does pay off to work hard and study. It made me really happy to know that I am capable of doing better.

Paper 11 (Narrative, score point 3)

Annotations:

- This response shows that the student has a general command of narration and understands the prompt. The writer states the happy occasion (making principal's list) and reveals to the reader her/his sense of anxiety during the day's wait.
- The writing is related to the topic, but lacks development. The reader wants or needs to know more. What exactly is *the principal's list* and why is making this list so important to this student? What is the difference between honor roll and principal's list? What e*xtra hard work* did he/she do? What constitutes *hard work*? Was the *ten minutes left* during the last period or was the homeroom period ten minutes?
- The writing has an organizational structure with some transitions and sentence variety, yet details need more specificity. The paper has a logical sense of completeness, as evidenced in the brief introduction, body, and conclusion; however, development is uneven.
- For the most part, the student follows conventions. The few errors (*not* for *now* and the vague pronoun *it*) do not detract from the essay.

Teaching Suggestions:

Compare this story with paper #9 which develops a similar theme of waiting for good news. Have students tell why the first story is more effective.

Compare this paper with paper #10 in terms of the suspense it creates. What might be revised in this paper to increase the suspense?

A narrative can reveal a character by her/his actions. How could this writer have developed her/his character more by showing her/his actions during the day? Discuss what should be done to convey a sense of nervousness or joy. What are characteristics of being nervous? How does a person look or act when filled with joy?

Have students describe what constitutes *hard work*. Make a list and include some examples in the paper. What effect do the inclusions have?

The Happiest Moment in my Life.

That was the happiest moment in your life?

Well let me tell you about the happiest moment in my life.

It was the fourth day of the Jackson County Fair. It was rainy and I had a show that night. The day went by slowly.

Then, finally, it was time to for the show to start. I got all dressed up in a nice pair of jeans, dressy shirt, and cowboy boots. I crabbed my cane and led my pig down the shoot.

My class was so big that they had to split us up, in order to fit us all in the arena.

The night slowly but surely drug on. Then it was time to announce the top five winners out of class one (my class). I got first place but it wasn't over yet the the second part of my class had to come in. Then finally

they announce the top five out of second part of the class.

Then they called the top five from the first class back out into the arena. Finally they announced the top five out of the top ten. Believe it or not I got first place and a trophy.

Tears of joy filled my eyes. I was so happy but I couldn't have done it without my pig, Amber.

Paper 12 (Narrative, score point 3)

Annotations:

- This narrative relates a happy occasion (winning at the Jackson County Fair). There is an organizational plan evident, even though it does suffer some lapses such as unexplained gaps in time (*The day went by slowly. Then finally it was time to for the show to start*). Events in the selection happen very quickly with little or no development. What specifically made *the day slow, the night slow*?
- The writer gives a general description of her/his dress, but he/she could have elaborated more. Clarity and development of ideas leave the reader with questions about specifics–what kind of show and class?
- Chronology of the events is logical, but the repetitive use of the word *then* and the lack of transitional words and phrases limits the paper's sense of completeness.
- There is evidence of sentence variety, but errors in conventions of punctuation and phrasing cause some impediment in reading. Problems also exist with pronoun-antecedent usage (*my class...they*). Other occasional errors in conventions (e.g., punctuation errors) exist; however, they do not impede communication in this paper.

Teaching Suggestions:

In this paper, the pronoun *they* is often used with no antecedent. Have the students locate unclear pronoun references and correct them.

Discuss chronological order or time sequence of this selection. Have students show where added information could be inserted during the day's events.

Write on the board the sentence: *I got all dressed up in a nice pair of jean, a dressy shirt, and cowboy boots.* Ask students to suggest additional details to describe the outfit.

Discuss the importance of outlining before attempting a writing assignment. Have students outline this paper and determine what is missing. Create a new outline for this event, then rewrite the paper and discuss.

It was about 2 years ago I was at school going home with a friend. The bell rang to let ~~door~~ school out, we got on the bus, he had a rose in his hand to give to his mother. Then on the way to his house a paperwod fight began we just sat there and laughed his rose got ript apart that he was gonona to give to his mother. When we got to my friends house, we sat down and watched some T.V. it was about 5:00. We went outside to fad his boyz and after that we rode 3wheller all that night we rode up hills and down the hills he told ~~he~~ me to watch my fingers or I will get them cut. We got back to his house and ate supper after supper we played some games, then he got his motorcycle out and runned it a while then his brother came out and started his 3wheller and I rode with him it was dark he turned on his lights and it blow nyz and we was out in the middle of a field we finnaly got back to his house and my mother was there to take me home I said goodbye and maybe you can come over some time'

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Paper 13 (Narrative, score point 2)

Annotations:

- The thesis of telling about a time that made a child happy is not stated or clearly inferred. This writer has simply stated a situation (going to his friend's house), and has given a list of events of their activities of the late afternoon and evening in order.
- The possible support for the thesis is very weak–merely a list of events. What details are offered are confusing and irrelevant.
- This response has organizational problems, as evidenced in the abrupt beginning. Also, the listy chronological sequence is repeatedly interrupted with details irrelevant to the central focus. (*Then on his way to his house...*) The story line rambles with little sense of pre-planning.
- The numerous errors in sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling cause serious distraction for the reader.

Teaching Suggestions:

Discuss the importance of strong thesis statements. Have the class suggest a thesis statement for this paper and an introduction that leads up to that thesis. Go through the paper and determine which events/details are relevant to the thesis. After identifying the events, solicit suggestions for supporting details of the events.

Have students read the paper again and suggest transitional words that can improve this sequence of events.

This paper offers a good opportunity to practice some editing skills. A good focus would be to find the run-on sentences and then to capitalize and punctuate appropriately. Construct exercises showing how students can rewrite run-on sentences.

Have students read the paper aloud as a way of locating missing words and faulty structures.

The happiest time of my life was when I really liked this guy. And I didn't even think he knew I existed and he called me one night. And we talked for hours and then we started going out. He was a really nice guy and I guess the reason I thought so was because he was different then any other guy I had went out with. We went places together all the time. My parents really liked him. But recently things haven't been working out and I hope they do because he made me laugh when I was down. He always cheered me up and he was always there for me.

And I'm not going to give up on him. Because we had something special. And he is what made me happy. So I hope you find something or someone that makes you happy.

:))

Paper 14 (Narrative, score point 2)

Annotations:

- This response is an unsuccessful narrative writing. The writer states a happy time (when a guy calls her) and goes on to relate a list of events that take place (*called me, talked for hours, started going out, went places*, etc.) Without specific content, however, the paper merely idles.
- Though the thesis is stated in the opening sentence, the paper is vague in its development of the thesis, which does little to illustrate the *happiest time of my life*... Statements made about the qualities of *this guy* are not supported by specific details. The paper offers numerous generalities without good support for the topic. (*He was a really nice guy*... and *My parents really liked him.*) How is he *really nice*? What makes him *different then any other guy*?
- The sequence of the relationship is not clear, though some effort is made at organization–from the initial phone call, to going out, to having problems. The concluding sentence unnecessarily shifts the focus from the writer to the reader.

Teaching Suggestions:

Discuss the narrative mode of writing. Since this writing centers on real people and actual occurrences, have students suggest details that describe the people's appearances and attitudes and the details that make the events of the story more vivid.

Discuss how the writer could use questions to generate better support. Who? What? When? Why? Where? For example, have students consider the following questions about the boyfriend:

A. How was he *different*? Describe uniqueness of character. Name him.
B. What *places* did you go to do what?
C. Why did your parents *like him*?
D. Why haven't *things been working out*?

Have students look at the sentences in this writing. Discuss which sentences contain problems. Rewrite the sentences for clarity. Combine sentences. Discuss the use of transitional words or phrases to better illustrate sequence of events.

Paper 15 (Narrative, score point 1)

There was once in my life when I was very happy. It was when I was 13 years old. We had went on a Vacation in the Rocky mountains My Grandparents and my parents were there it was the happiest moment that I have every had because we were all together. Now my grandpa is dead so it will never be the same. I enjoyed it while I could.

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Paper 15 (Narrative, score point 1)

Annotations:

- This response shows little evidence of narration. The writer identifies a happy experience that can be written about, but the story of that experience is never narrated. The happy time (*vacation in the Rocky Mountains*) is stated with one detail (*we were all together*). However, there are no extensions or elaborations.
- The major weakness in this paper is the lack of detailed development. Details are sparse, and there is an abrupt closing. What happens on this vacation?
- Although this paper has fewer mechanical errors than typical "1's", it contains several errors such as the verb form *had went*, the homophone error *their*, and a long run-on sentence.

Teaching Suggestions:

It might be useful to consider this paper as a "writing prompt" and have the students supply the missing details that this paper lacks.

After reading the response in class, ask students to consider audience. Have them suggest ways the paper might turn into a photo album of "word pictures" from the Rocky Mountain vacation. Fill in the "picture" frames with detail to make the album shots vivid. The reader appreciates images that contain accurate description and clear focus. The "stills" are specific concrete nouns, while the "movies" are action verbs.

Have students offer ideas on what special place grandparents have in their lives. The relationship of the grandparents appears to mean something to the writer of this paper, yet there are no details to explain what that relationship was and why it was important. What about the grandmother? Is there still a relationship with the writer? The final sentence needs added detail.

Ask students to identify incorrectly capitalized words; then review basic capitalization rules.

I am writing a story for my school it is the first issue of the magazine. I have to write about when my happies time. It was when me and my friend went shopping my mom gave me $400 dollars and it was me Bryan, and Mike. It was just we and a lot of women. We buyed a lot of clothes and we went to it at Rizza but it was fun and that about all.

Paper 16 (Narrative, score point 1)

Annotations:

- This writer clearly understands the prompt: he begins his paper by restating it. However, he shows no evidence of understanding the narrative mode of writing. There is no evidence of a time sequence usually apparent in narrative writing. The response lacks a sense of completeness–beginning, middle, and end.
- Ideas need extension. Reasons are given for why this was a happy shopping experience, but none is elaborated. The writer simply lists the fun things they did (*saw alot of women, buyed alot of clothes, went to it at Pizza Hut*). Details about the women, the clothes, and their meal would have improved this paper.
- This paper also has fewer mechanical errors than most "1's"; however, it contains a number of surface errors (*happies, buyed, me and my friend, alot*) that keep it at the "1" level. This effort also suffers from run-on sentences and an overuse of the pronoun "it."

Teaching Suggestions:

Reading this paper aloud might reveal some of its more glaring errors. This might be a springboard into a discussion of revision. Students may benefit from a "whisper reading" of their papers instead of just looking back over their work.

Have students list the spelling and grammatical errors in this selection. Discuss corrections.

The writer needed to keep in mind that this story was to be published in a school magazine. Discuss with students the importance of being aware of the audience–those to whom you are speaking through your writing. Have students list, specifically, what they do when they go shopping.

Discuss with students the focus on "it" as the pronoun of choice of this writer. Have students rewrite/edit the paper focusing on varying sentence beginnings.

My mom was throwing a party for all women. You know, one of those parties where they look at brochures with dishes and glasses and stuff like that in them. Well, dad and I didn't stay for that. Instead we went over to my uncle's house to watch the Browns football game on T.V.

I was all excited, going over to uncle Jim's to watch a playoff game! It was a close game with the Browns just winning the game. This got me all hyped up.

We returned home to the post-party left overs. Wrappers were lying on the table, in the kitchen, and a few people still hanging around and talking to mom. As soon as I got in the door I had some left over jello that mom had made. After I had finished it off I ran to the toy box as fast as I could and grabbed my little rubber football and went into the dining room.

I started running around, catching passes, recovering fumbles, trying to immitate the pros. Then I thought, I wonder what it would be like to have contact, just like on T.V.? So I threw the ball down by the sharp edge of the buffet table and dived after it. Wham! All I can remember is lying there flat with a sharp pain on my forehead. I didn't cry, but it sure was

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painful. I touched my head to see if it was all right and I looked at my finger. There was blood on it! I couldn't belive it, yah it hurt, but not that bad. I went to mom for a second opinion.

I said, "Mom, am I bleeding?" in a sleepy moan of a voice. All I remember then is mom said "Oh my god, what happend?!"

I rushed in to the mirror to look at it. There was a gash on my head from the top of my forehead to the bottom, like someone had ripped the seam.

Then I was rushed to the hospital with a wet rag on my head. The doctors gave me something to stop the pain and the all I remember is a huge light glaring down on me as they stitched me up. I couldn't feel any pain.

That was the first and last time I had to get stitches.

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Paper 17 (Descriptive, score point 4)

Annotations:

- This student describes an incident where he injured himself imitating the actions of a pro football player. The description is set up when the student related that he got *all hyped up* by watching a pro game with his father and uncle. A secondary plot describing his mother's party *for all women...where they look at brochures with dishes and glasses and stuff like that* is interwoven with the main plot.
- The hyperactive behavior is clearly described in the fourth paragraph *running around, catching passes, recovering fumbles...* These offer nice detail extension characteristic of a "4" score.
- The student displays good word choice with expressions like *I went to mom for a second opinion, ripped the seam,* and *a huge light glaring down on me.* The writing also achieves dramatic intensity in places through the use of dialogue.
- This paper offers an excellent opportunity to illustrate that vivid descriptions and appropriate word choice do not always require the use of multisyllabic words to make their point. The mental images and connotative power of this student's writing are excellent.
- The paper does seem a bit rushed at the end and the comment about first and last stitches seems extraneous.
- The paper's few errors do not impede the reader.

Teaching Suggestions:

The second paragraph is sparse. The writer could have strengthened the main incident (injury) if he had developed the viewing of the game. Have students call up vivid images of some spectacular plays of a football game–plays that the writer will later imitate: passes, fumbles, tackles, etc. Rewrite the second paragraph adding the extensions and elaborations.

Discuss sentence structure with students. Have students read aloud the second sentence in the third paragraph: *Wrappers were lying...and a few people still...* Discuss ways to make the construction of this sentence parallel.

Reread the one-sentence conclusion. Did the writer leave the readers with some new insight about the topic? Relate the connection of the conclusion to an introduction (thesis). Strengthen the closure in this paper.

Ask students to suggest transitions that may be used to link paragraphs two and three. (*This got me all hyped up.* with *We returned home...*) so that the mood may be more cohesive.

Discuss with students the importance of extended descriptions. Have students read the paper, eliminating sentence #2, paragraph 1; sentence #3, paragraph 2; sentence #2, paragraph 3; sentences #5, #6, #7, #8, #9, paragraph 4; paragraph 5; sentence #2, paragraph 6; sentence #2, #3, paragraph 7. How effective is the paper without the extensions?

Discuss with students how the use of dialogue further personalizes this account–gives the paper "voice."

Discuss with students why they think the writer included a secondary plot (his mother's party) in this paper. Would the effectiveness of the paper be lessened if the secondary plot is removed?

An experience I had as a child was when I moved from Columbus Ohio to a suburb, Dublin Ohio. It wasn't that far at all, about 20 miles. But to me it felt more like 300 miles. I was leaving the only home I ever knew, the friends and family I had grown up with, my school, which was a very small Catholic school where everyone knew everyone else. I felt like the world was coming to an end. I was, quite frankly, terrified of the thought of moving.

It was the summer before 4th grade when my parents dropped the bombshell. We needed a bigger house, and we had the money, so why not move to a quiet suburb where the schools have so much more to offer? Well, I was furious. I was perfectly satisfied where I was. But it was already decided, we would move the following October. after our "new" house would be done with construction. I fought so hard to change there minds but there was nothing I could do. Their minds were made up.

I loved our old house. It wasn't big, by any means, just big enough to suit me. It was rather old, built in the 1920's. as were all the other houses in our neighborhood. It was fixed up nicely. For when my parents first were married

they didn't have much money. But over the years as my father got promoted and they're bank account increased, they fixed up the once falling apart house. They were so proud of it it was the nicest one on our block? why would they want to leave it?

I remember oh so well the day I moved. It was a cold, blustery day, overcast. The weather outside matched my mood perfectly. I think back to that final farewell when I said goodbye to all the things I loved; my sunset, the big old oak tree, my blue + white bedroom, my school, and most of all, all my friends. I still feel sad when I think back to that day.

But here I am, 5 years later. Happy and well adjusted to a home and town I didn't want to come to in the first place. I've made a new life for myself, and I guess I'm glad it did move. It just goes to show that over a period of time things get easier and you learn to love new things that come into your life.

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Paper 18 (Descriptive, score point 4)

Annotations:

- This description of a childhood move is effective in part because the writer takes time to describe the situation at various points in the move. The appeal of the old house, for example, is effectively explained in paragraph three. There is excellent extension of ideas and vivid expressions.
- The essay shows good organization as it progresses smoothly, has a sustained sequence, and nice closure. The piece contains an effective introduction and conclusion, and paragraphs effectively describe different moments in the move.
- The writing exhibits excellent sentence variety (short and long sentences, compound, complex sentences) and is almost error-free.

Teaching Suggestions:

Discuss with students the use of vivid verbs when describing an event. Change the verb *terrified* to *scared*; *dropped the bombshell* to *told me*; *furious* to *mad*; *blustery* to *windy*; and *overcast* to *cloudy*. How do the changes affect the description?

Eliminate the opening and closing paragraphs and read the paper. What is lost in the overall effectiveness? Discuss the importance of good opening and closing paragraphs.

What words, phrases, or sentences clearly show the effect of the move on the writer?

Use the paper as an opportunity to extend with dialogue. Dialogue could be used in the second paragraph when the parents talk to the writer about moving. Include instruction about dialogue punctuation. Encourage writers of dialogue to read their conversations aloud.

Discuss with the students how the writer could build the following with extensions and elaborations: leaving home, the friends, the old school and the neighborhood. While the development of the *old house* is well done, elaborations on how the house was fixed up would enhance the writing. Why did parents need a *bigger house*?

The use of *things* in the last sentence weakens the conclusion. Ask students to replace the general word with a specific word to make the meaning more effective.

My Childhood Experience

Let's get down to point. I have to write this essay and you have too evaluate my writting skills. So you have my pity of reading this. I'll try to make it interesting as I can. With out further adew my childhood experience.

Before I came to Ohio I lived on a wealthy, profitable farm in the heart of Dixie, (thats Alabama to you yankees). Then all of that changed.

One day, on the farm, my Mother and Farther had a terrible quarrel that had lasted for a couple of days. I was scared, because back then I was six and a half. When the fighting had ended something horrible came out of it, a divorce!

I was confused and bewildered. A divorce was shocking to me, after my mother explained it for me. Why was my parents splitting up, ending a marriage that produced three lovely children? Didn't they love each any more. It was apparent they had differences. So my Mom had gotten custody of us and moved to Ohio.

My Mom moved to Ohio because she had friends and family up here, who I've grown to love.

I still miss Alabama but nothing can beat Ohio. During Football season I rout for the Buckeys and the Crimson Tide.

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I still wander what would have happen if they didn't get a divorce. (I prolly wouldn't be here taking this test). I would still be in Alabama on the farm.

So there you go an experience that altered my life forever. I hope I didn't put you to sleep reading this, because that would mean I have a boring life.

The End

Paper 19 (Descriptive, score point 3)

Annotations:

- This paper relates a very significant incident in the student's life. The writer uses humor, rhetorical questions, and good vocabulary to describe a confusing and frightening situation. Although the description is adequate, it lacks the necessary specificity to achieve a "4".
- The paper shows an attempt at organization and the development of the events leading to the divorce. However, there are some gaps in the organization (between the divorce and the move to Ohio).
- There are lapses in explanations, such as in paragraph 3, which begins with *One day...* yet the quarrel lasted several days and as to why Ohio is important in supporting football teams. Extensions and elaborations of Ohio friends and family and Ohio football would also improve the content.
- The apologetic opening and closing detract from the reading.
- The paper contains errors in both mechanics (*writting, with out further adew, why was my parents, who I've grown to love, rout*) and sentence structure (*A divorce was shocking ...mother explained it for me, So there you go..my life forever*). However, these surface errors do not impede or detract from the "3"-like quality of the paper.

Teaching Suggestions:

There is good use of sentence variety in this paper. Discuss the use in this paper. Ask students to rewrite the paper using simple sentences only. What is the effect on a reader if a paper is written only in simple sentences? How effective is a paper written only in simple sentences?

Stress the importance of revision. Tell students that they should check to make sure that the grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling are correct. Carefully proofreading writing assures the readers that the writer is serious and reliable.

Prepare and distribute editing worksheets and have students identify and correct the errors in the sample (i.e., accurately used words, conventional capitalization and spelling, appropriate internal and end punctuation, agreement).

What effect does this introduction have on the reader? Will the writer unnecessarily lose credibility by using an "apologetic" tone? How could the conclusion be changed to strengthen the writer's credibility? Ask students to rewrite the introduction and conclusion.

Use the paper to emphasize how students may often assume the reader knows more than the words convey. *Nothing can beat Ohio* is not adequately supported as an opinion. Have the class suggest various devices for support.

The three ideas at the end of the paper (*moved to Ohio, nothing can beat Ohio, and wander what would have happen...*) need development. Have students suggest extensions and elaborations.

One hot summer day my family and I were over at Cedar Point enjoying ourselves. We Got on all kinds of rides. We ate alot of stuff. Then came the frighting part of the trip I got lost. We were watching the band and when I turned around they weren't there anymore. Me being the little four year old that I was went into a state of shock. I turned around in a circle noticing the big park I had to walk around to find my family. I began to cry. I sat down in the middle of the walk-way, covered my eyes, and waited until some-one would help me. About five minutes later Someone tapped me on my shalder and asked me what was wrong. I told him what had happened, and so he took me to this place. I really couldn't comprehend to what he was telling the lady at the desk. What ever it was it must have been about me. They ~~start~~ started asking me alot of qevestions about my mom and dad. They asked me what color shirt my dad had on. And I was puzzled because I had broke the golden rule Never talk to Strangers. They asked me again and I said

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I can't tell you and I began to cry again. They tried to convince me that they were trying to help me but I wouldn't listen. As I sat there I felt very sad, I didn't know what to do. I had just lost the most important people in my life. And I would probably Never see them again. And when I looked up coming in the door was my mom and dad. I was so relieved. I hugged them both and told them to Never leave me again.

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Paper 20 (Descriptive, score point 3)

Annotations:

- This paper demonstrates somewhat of a controlled organization and a sense of completeness with a beginning (weakest), a middle, and an ending (strongest). However, the organizational problems may have been more apparent to the writer if he/she had used paragraphs.
- There is good sentence variety, and the writer makes the reader feel the confusion and fear of a four-year-old who waits for someone to help and then refuses to talk to strangers. However, the vague or general statements (*all kind of rides, ate alot of stuff, took me to this place*) lessen the effectiveness. The four-year-old point of view is effective but could be developed for even better effect.
- Language problems also detract from the overall effectiveness of the paper (*over at Cedar Point, comprehend to what*).

Teaching Suggestions:

Have students paragraph this paper. Discuss what could be added/deleted for better organization of thoughts and events. Discuss the importance of organization in communications.

Have students rewrite the event from where the child sat on the ground to where the child sat in the park services office. The inconsistency in this portion of the paper is an impediment to comprehension of the event.

Discuss with students the language used in this writing. How can the language in this paper be improved? Have students rewrite the paper using the suggestions for improvement.

Consider the generalities used in this narrative. Have students make a list of nouns and pronouns in the paper. Make specific, concrete nouns from the vague general references. Examples: *rides* could become *roller coaster* and *merry-go-round*; *band* could *become rock band, The Misfits* or *country bluegrass pickers*; *someone (tapped me on the shoulder)* could become a *husky teenaged boy in a Cleveland Indians cap*; *place* could *become the missing persons' center* or *park headquarters*; *They (started asking me questions)* could become *park officials*; *stuff* (ate) could become *ice cream, pepperoni pizza and cotton candy*.

Using the perspective of a four-year-old, have students write a paragraph describing one aspect of an amusement park mentioned in this paper.

WHEN I WAS A child I GOT IN TROUBLE a lot ALMOST EVERYDAY I GOT IN TROUBLE WITH MY MOM SCHOOL AND FRIENDS BUT I didn't KNOW ANY BETTER like WHEN I GOT IN TROUBLE FOR JUMPING OVER A WALL. I didn't THINK I would GET IN TROUBLE FOR IT BUT IT WAS FUN TO JUMP OVER THE WALL. I ALSO GOT IN TROUBLE AT HOME. SOMETIMES I would MAKE A MESS IN THE LIVING ROOM And WOULDN'T CLEAN IT UP I WOULD GOT IN SO MUCH TROUBLE. I ALSO would get in TROUBLE WITH MY FRIENDS. SOMTIMES INTO fights WITH MY FRIENDS like OVER A PIECE OF CANDY OR A NAME OR A MOVIE

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Paper 21 (Descriptive, score point 2)

Annotations:

- This paper, about the writer's propensity for not always behaving or doing what he/she is told, lists too many incidents without focusing on any one of them. This indicates an awareness of the prompt, but the writing does not sustain the prompt.
- With proper development, each incident could have been described under an umbrella thesis that focused on the writer's continuous misbehavior. The apparent lack of development leaves the paper with a sense of being incomplete.
- Poor sentence structure (run-ons), word choice (*I got in trouble a lot almost every day I got in trouble*), and punctuation problems (*mom school and friends*) culminate in an immature piece of writing.

Teaching Suggestions:

Three specific problems are mentioned, but with little support as to what warnings and punishments were meted out. Have students take the phrase *got in trouble* and have them list specific examples of what might have been done to cause the trouble. Have students do the same with *amess*. Discuss the effectiveness of using specific examples.

Discuss the importance of development. Have students make three columns on a sheet of notebook paper. Label each column with a specific problem that the writer faced. Generate ideas on how each incident can be extended or elaborated:

Jumping over the wall	Mess in the living room	Fights with friends
where?	what kind?	what kind?
when?	when?	where?
how?	how?	outcome?

Discuss the importance of a strong thesis statement. Have the class suggest a thesis statement for this paper and an introduction that supports the thesis. Have student determine which events/details are relevant to the thesis. Then have students consider adding a paragraph to the end of the sample. Discuss how they would summarize the writing–what key points should be included?

Practice punctuating items in a series (*mom school and friends...*)

Discuss how this writer needs basic intervention strategies for both language arts and mechanical skills–especially sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation. Have students rewrite this paper for clarity, development, organization, etc. Discuss the effectiveness of the rewrite.

A childhood experience that I never
forgot was when I was five years
old. That afternoon I had asked my mother
for a certs breath mint and I choked
on it. I couldn't breathe and they had
to call for an ambulance to take me
to the hospital. I was so scared I
was going to die as I panicked. My mother
was crying tell them To help me I
couldn't breathe. When I got to the
hospital they got the mint from
between my throat. The doctor gave
me all kinds of treats cause when
they were getting out the mint I
didn't move or pull away.

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Paper 22 (Descriptive, score point 2)

Annotations:

- This paper addresses the prompt–a near tragedy as a child–and has some development, but too little to be a passing paper. We know what happened (the child choked on a mint) but do not know any of the details surrounding the incident (what happened when the writer choked, when the writer panicked, how they got to the hospital, etc.).
- Errors include poor word choice (*mother was crying tell them..., mint from between my throat*), and pronoun problems (vague *they* and *them*).
- There is a simple organizational plan (chronological), but it is hampered by the lack of details.

Teaching Suggestions:

Ask students to work on extensions of stated events: how did the doctors remove the mint? What treat was given since it was a treat that caused the original problem?

Discuss the importance of a strong introduction and conclusion. Have the students rewrite the introduction and conclusion. The conclusion should indicate whether or not the writer now has a fear of mints, offering words of caution about children eating small candies, or what the parents said about the event.

Prepare exercises of indefinite pronouns. Practice using specific nouns instead of the indefinite use of "they."

That afternoon I had asked my mother for a cert's breath mint and I choked on it. This sentence could be the center (power point) of the paper. It begs for descriptive detail. Since this is the most dramatic section, push for development. Have students construct a timeline that would be helpful in recounting the event:

Before I choked	Choking on mint	After I choked

List sensory details before, during, and after the frightening episode. Have students give specific examples of the actions/feelings of the child and the mother.

Have the students make a list of questions to ask the writer. For example, what was being done before the ambulance came? What signs of panic were there? How was the mint removed–what was specifically done? What did the doctors say to calm the writer? Use these questions to generate specific details for the paper.

Paper 23 (Descriptive, score point 1)

My one expeirence that happened to me when I was going to the sixth grade. We had just moved to Puerto Rico in July of 86. We moved to the southeastern part of Puerto Rico. It was a good expeirence because I learned a new language, I met new people, I did well at the end of the school year and passed with all C's. Then we moved back in the summer of 87.

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Paper 23 (Descriptive, score point 1)

Annotations:

- This response shows an inadequate command of descriptive writing. The writer could easily have described what the *southwestern part of Puerto* Rico was like, what new language was learned, and what the new people were like.
- An experience from childhood is identified, and a conclusion is given about it (*It was a good experience...*), but almost nothing about the move to Puerto Rico is elaborated or extended. The paper lacks support/extension of what was good about these experiences.
- While this paper is fluent, it is too brief and undeveloped to be a successful effort. As a result, organization is weak. An introduction could indicate why the family *moved to Puerto Rico in July of 86* and a conclusion could explain why the family moved *back in the summer of 87*.
- Although the essay begins with a sentence fragment, the rest of the paper is relatively error-free.

Teaching Suggestions:

Discuss with students the ingredients and organizational plan of a descriptive paper. Write each experience from the writing on the board and reinforce the idea that specific vivid details appeal to the five senses. They can help the reader see, hear, feel, smell, and taste what is being described. Have students add details to create these vivid pictures.

Discuss the importance of development. Write each experience of the writer on the chalkboard. Have students add details to create a vivid picture.

Learned new language	Met new people	Did well
what?	who?	in what?
how?	where?	how?
why?	when?	outcome?

Next, have students put these ideas into paragraph form.

Ask students to cast themselves in the role of travel agent. The students should select an area with which they have extensive knowledge. They must convince the reader that this area offers many good experiences. Remember, readers need extensive detail to "get the picture." Have students provide information about the people, the language, and the schools, with special attention paid to description.

Divide the class into three groups. Assign each group one of the reasons that this move was a good experience. The groups must generate one paragraph each, offering specific information for each reason. As a whole class, put the paragraphs together. Discuss the effectiveness of the new paragraphs.

Discuss the introduction (a sentence fragment) and the conclusion. Have students write a new introduction and conclusion. Discuss the importance of a strong thesis statement and how, when done correctly, it provides a guide for development of writing.

The student could describe what school is like in Puerto Rico as compared to Ohio. Have students explain the difficulties they might encounter learning in a language different from their native language?

I brake my arm when I was about 9 years old. I jumped off of a ladder just playing around and I hit straight on the ground with my left arm as a fall braker. I ended up I brake my arm and it didn't feel very good. I had the cast on for about 12 or 13 weeks over the summer. I did not think it was fun but I got threw it and it wasent very bad at all.

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Paper 24 (Descriptive, score point 1)

Annotations:

- This response shows an inadequate command of descriptive writing. The effort does address the prompt, and the writer even offers an assessment of the experience in the last sentence. The events in the experience are related very swiftly, however.
- While we have an understanding of the incident, the writer fails to extend or develop what happened. Those details that are given (*jumped off a ladder, I broke my arm...*) are general and fail to make sense of the scene.
- There is little evidence of an organizational plan. The writer states the experience (broken arm) but the central focus is unclear (*...it diden't feel very good...it wasent very bad at all*).
- While the paper has a number of mechanical errors (threw, wasent) and poor word choice (*my left arm as a fall braker*), sentence problems are few.

Teaching Suggestions:

Have students write a newspaper article about the incident. Employ the journalistic lead (who, what, where, when, why, how) and elaborate secondary details.
Example:

GIMME A BREAK!
Johnny Taylor Suffers Setback

Eight-year-old Pee Wee Football star quarterback Johnny Taylor tumbled from his father's ladder while playing Superman on Tuesday and broke his left arm. Obviously in great pain, he was taken by his mother to St. Luke's Hospital where Dr. Freeman confirmed the fracture, set the break, and cast his arm. Taylor is expected to miss twelve weeks of the season, virtually ending his team's chances of winning their second consecutive league championship. When asked about the extent of his injury, Johnny said, "It's a dull ache–kind of like a toothache, and it itches under the cast like crazy!" He vowed never again to impersonate the Man of Steel.

Select a descriptive passage from a reading assignment and show students how the writer reveals:

a) the main idea of the description
b) the specific details
c) how those details appeal to the senses
d) the pattern of organization

Have students develop this paper through discussion/listing of specific details/elaboration of events. Begin with the ladder. Where was it? What kind of ladder was it? Why was the ladder in the place it was? Discuss the effectiveness of specificity and extension.

Prepare and distribute editing worksheets. Group students and have them identify and correct any errors in development, organization, language, and mechanicals that appear in the paper (i.e., planning, details, organization, word choice, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, agreement, etc.).

Many students have problems with homophones (through,threw/brake, break), even in better papers. Practice the correct use of these by actually writing sentences using them in an appropriate manner.

Appendix A
Rubric for Holistic Scoring

"4" The writing focuses on the topic with ample supporting ideas or examples and has a logical structure. The paper conveys a sense of completeness, or wholeness. The writing demonstrates a mature command of language, including precision in word choice. With rare exceptions, sentences are complete except when fragments are used purposefully. Subject/verb agreement and verb and noun forms are generally correct. With few exceptions, the paper follows the conventions of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

"3" The writing is generally related to the topic with adequate supporting ideas or examples, although development may be uneven. Logical order is apparent, although some lapses may occur. The paper exhibits some sense of completeness, or wholeness. Word choice is generally adequate and precise. Most sentences are complete. There may be occasional errors in subject/verb agreement and in standard forms of verbs and nouns but not enough to impede communication. The conventions of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling are generally followed.

"2" The writing demonstrates an awareness of the topic but may include extraneous or loosely related material. Some supporting ideas or examples are included but are not developed. An organizational pattern has been attempted. The paper may lack a sense of completeness. Vocabulary is adequate but limited, predictable, and occasionally vague. Readability is limited by errors in sentence structure, subject/verb agreement, and verb and noun forms. Knowledge of the conventions of punctuation and capitalization is demonstrated. With few exceptions, commonly used words are spelled correctly.

"1" The writing is only slightly related to the topic, offering few supporting ideas or examples. The writing exhibits little or no evidence of an organizational pattern. Development of ideas is erratic, inadequate, or illogical. Limited or inappropriate vocabulary obscures meaning. Gross errors in sentence structure and usage impede communication. Frequent and blatant errors occur in basic punctuation and capitalization, and commonly used words are frequently misspelled.

"0" Non-scorable. A paper may be considered non-scorable for any of the following reasons:

A Blank paper
B Refusal to write
C Illegible/foreign language
D Insufficient text
E Off topic or off task
F Erased or crossed out
G Plagiarism

Appendix B
Summary of Writing Performance

While every effort is made to equate the difficulty of each test form based upon data from the field testing, variations in student performance on the writing test from test form to test form are to be expected due to several factors. One variable is the population of students taking any given form: this group changes each year. The majority of school districts in the state now test their eighth-graders during the spring administration, making these groups more valuable for comparison. Initially, however, comparisons were made based on ninth-graders during the fall administration.

Each form of the test contains two writing prompts, each of which is designed to elicit one of three (descriptive, expository, or narrative) modes of writing. Since students are required to write to both prompts, each student's score reflects performance on two of the three types. The table below illustrates the history of the writing test for first-time test takers. Listed are the modes of the two topics, the average score for each topic, the sum total of the averages of the two prompts and the percentage of students passing.

Statistics shown below are based on first attempts only, in this case ninth-graders taking the test in the fall. Since spring testing was primarily students re-taking the test, these scores are not used for comparison:

Form	Prompt 1 mode/avg.	Prompt 2 mode/avg.	Avg. Total Raw Score	% Pass
Fall 1990	Narrative (2.89)	Expository (2.43)	5.32	76%
Fall 1991	Narrative (2.74)	Descriptive (2.81)	5.55	76%
Fall 1992	Descriptive (2.42)	Expository (2.69)	5.11	68%
Fall 1993	Narrative (3.01)	Expository (2.66)	5.67	85%
Fall 1994	Expository (2.88)	Narrative (2.34)	5.23	78%
Fall 1995	Expository (2.34)	Descriptive (2.18)	4.52	72%

Statistics shown below are based on first attempts only, in this case eighth-graders taking the test in the spring. Since fall testing was primarily students re-taking the test, these scores are not used for comparison:

Form	Prompt 1 mode/avg.	Prompt 2 mode/avg.	Avg. Total Raw Score	% Pass
Spring 1996	Narrative (2.50)	Expository (2.57)	5.07	62%
Spring 1997	Expository (2.74)	Descriptive (2.71)	5.45	77%
Spring 1998	Expository (3.04)	Descriptive (2.80)	5.84	88%
Spring 1999	Descriptive (2.89)	Expository (2.81)	5.70	86%

The percentage of students who pass writing can fluctuate from form to form. These variations can be attributed to several factors including the relative difficulty of the prompts included on a form, the modes of writing these prompts are designed to elicit, the pairing patterns, and the test-taking population.

Appendix C
Guaranteeing The Stability Of The Scoring Of The Writing Samples Within The Proficiency Testing Program

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) has established and requires the scoring contractor to follow a standard set of procedures to ensure the accuracy and stability of the scoring of writing in the proficiency testing programs. The following are illustrations of these procedures.

The scoring contractor meets in both the fall and spring with a group of eight Ohio educators (six of whom are classroom English language arts teachers) to select marker papers that exemplify points of the scoring rubric for each writing prompt to be tested. This rangefinder committee reads and scores papers that were written by ninth-graders during the original field testing of the prompts. Representatives of the scoring contractor who will be in charge of the writing test scoring project listen to the reading, observe the scoring, and participate in discussions concerning these papers.

These individuals attending the rangefinder meetings are the same people who will train the prospective readers in how Ohio teachers want the scoring rubric interpreted. ODE stipulates that all readers who score Ohio writing samples must be college graduates. Many have participated previously in large-scale writing scoring projects. All must be trained in using the Ohio rubric and rangefinder papers and pass a test that shows they understand how Ohio educators expect papers to be scored. This test consists of reading and scoring several packets of papers and having their scores compared with the scores assigned by the Ohio rangefinder group. Prospective readers must meet a minimum criterion of 80% agreement with the rangefinder scores.

Members of both the rangefinder committee and ODE staff observe the training of prospective readers, the administration of the qualifying tasks, and the beginning of the actual scoring of the writing samples. These observations occur for both fall and spring scoring.

But it is not enough that Ohio teachers explain, the scoring contractor's representatives listen and train, and then several Ohio teachers observe the training and some of the actual scoring. Ohio people cannot observe every day nor review every readers' score on every paper. There must be a daily check of readers' abilities to continue to apply the scoring rubric consistently.

To ensure consistency during the entire project, the scoring contractor prepares additional packets of previously scored field-test papers which are included periodically in each reader's work load. The scoring of these packets enables the contractor to check the work of each reader each day to make sure the reader is not straying from the rubric. These special sets of papers, called calibration sets, are used to track each reader's progress. Any reader who strays from the Ohio requirements on these papers is given retraining in the Ohio scoring rubric or let go.

The contractor provides ODE statistical evidence regarding the stability of the scoring of the writing samples for all readers throughout the entire scoring project. The evidence provided during the years of the testing program shows that each contractor achieved a high level of consistency over time–e.g., each had achieved over a 70% perfect match among raters (meaning that two readers gave each paper the same score) and 99% agreement on adjacent scores (meaning that the two readers gave a paper scores that differ by no more than one point). Statewide, the stability of the percentage of students passing the writing test during each of the fall and spring administrations is another indication that the scoring rubric is being applied consistently.

In 1988, English language arts teachers across the state were persuasive in seeking a demonstration of writing skills on the proficiency test. The Department of Education is committed to providing as many objective measures as possible to ensure the validity and reliability of the scoring of those writing samples. ODE staff believe the measures described above and the involvement of Ohio teachers (e.g., the rangefinder committee) in the decision-making process do serve to maintain the stability of the scoring of writing within the proficiency testing program.

Annotated Bibliography

Cooper, Charles R. and Lee Odel. Evaluating Writing: Describing, Measuring, Judging. Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English, 1977.

This collection of six lengthy essays offers different approaches to the assessment of writing. The essay by Cooper on holistic evaluation and the one on primary trait scoring by Lloyd-Jones are particularly useful. The book presents theory more than it does practical issues, but is a very good background for those interested in assessment techniques and theory.

Diederich, Paul B. Measuring Growth in English. Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English, 1974.

In this classic book about writing assessment theory, the author discusses how to work for reliability and validity of direct measurement of writing. The book includes some student papers and a scoring guide for evaluation.

Greenberg, Karen L., Harvey S. Wiener, and Richard A. Donovan. Writing Assessment: Issues and Strategies. New York: Longman, 1986.

Especially interesting in this collection of 12 essays by experts in the field of writing assessment are Marie Lederman's piece, "Why Test?" and the work of Roscoe C. Browne, Jr. on the testing of black student writers. Gordon Brossell's essay, "Current Research and Unanswered Questions in Writing Assessment," raises many testing issues for administrators and teachers.

Herreman, Dana. "The Ninth-Grade Proficiency Test: What Do Students Tell Us That Can Help Us Help Them?" Ohio Journal of the English Language Arts. 32.2 (Fall 1991): 27 – 30.

In this article, the author uses the responses of students in her own class to the test in writing to find out where the problems were for students and to make some generalizations about how important practice in writing and confidence in the validity of one's own ideas are for student success.

Judy, Stephen N. The ABCs of Literacy: A Guide for Parents and Educators. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980.

In this book Judy calls for a new reform in teaching reading and writing beginning in the very early grades, a reform that must also involve community and parents to be successful. Included are very practical suggestions for the things we must do to correct the "literacy problem."

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This extremely friendly, useful text gives teachers of writing practical, class-tested advice on helping students learn how to write. Especially good are Chapter 5 on the journal, Chapter 12 on revision strategies, and Chapter 14 on grading and evaluating.

Lyman, Howard, B. Test Scores and What They Mean. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1979.

This book for nonspecialists explains and clarifies statistical theory about testing. Included is a good glossary of terms about testing and a very good chapter on "Testing and Social Responsibility."

Murphy, Gratia. "Glancing Over Their Shoulders: Middle School English Instruction and the Ohio Proficiency Tests." Ohio Middle School Journal. 18.1 (Fall/Winter 1991): 10 – 13.

The author suggests ways that teachers of middle school and junior high can work in the classroom with strategies that will make students more comfortable and confident when they face the proficiency tests in writing for the first time.

Myers, Miles. Procedures for Writing Assessment and Holistic Scoring. Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English, 1980.

This useful book describes holistic scoring all the way from training and reading sessions to reporting the results. It includes student papers, especially of younger writers.

Odell, Lee. "Defining and Assessing Competence in Writing." In The Nature and Measurement of Competence in English. Charles Cooper, ed. Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English, 1981. 95 – 138.

Odell's excellent essay explores how we assess competence in writing. He argues against multiple-choice tests and urges the use of writing samples.

Salvner, Gary, ed. Teaching and Assessing Writing. Special Issue of Ohio Journal of the English Language Arts. 32.1 (Spring 1991).

The whole issue of the OJELA is devoted to articles about classroom instruction and testing in English. Of particular interest are Glenn Lambert's essay on a reasonable proposal for proficiency testing and Marcia Rybczynski's piece on portfolio assessment as another way to ascertain the competency of student writing. Jacqueline Glasgow's "Gender-Fair Essay Topics in Writing Assessment" and R.L. Rapp's "The Effects of State-Mandated Standardized Testing on Teaching and Learning" raise some interesting issues that need to be addressed. Gratia Murphy's "Seeing the Elephant: An Inside View of Ohio's Proficiency Testing in Writing" is a report of the observation team that visited the scoring site during the first year of proficiency testing and observed the procedures for selecting readers and scoring papers.

Tate, Gary and Edward P.J. Corbett, eds. The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.

A collection of 32 essays, this book is divided into two general parts: theory and practice. Particularly useful are essays on planning writing assignments (written by Richard Larson) and Sarah D'Eloia's "The Uses–and Limits–of Grammar." Each group of essays is followed by a bibliography of further readings, and there is an extensive annotated list of important books on writing and the teaching of writing.

Wiener, Harvey S. The Writing Room: A Resource Book for Teachers of English. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.

In this practical "what to do on Monday morning" book for the teacher of writing, Wiener offers many classroom-tested approaches and strategies for composing, revising, and editing.

White, Edward M. Teaching and Assessing Writing. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1985.

White's book covers all aspects of holistic assessment, from choosing a topic to conducting reading to reporting results.

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